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HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Department of Business Administration
Stephen C. Cosmas, Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University

#525

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Summary:

This study is designed to gain insights into various aspects of family decision making. Specifically, the study examines the prevalence of autonomous versus joint decision making, the incidence of conflict in joint decision making, and the tactics used by individual household members in resolving conflict.

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... 100 ...

DATE	NAME	AGE	SEX
1911	John A. Smith	21	M
1912	William A. Smith	22	M
1913	John A. Smith	23	M
1914	John A. Smith	24	M

...

...

DATE	NAME	AGE	SEX
1915	John A. Smith	25	M
1916	John A. Smith	26	M
1917	John A. Smith	27	M
1918	John A. Smith	28	M

HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Significant research has recently emerged in the area of family buyer behavior especially about the husband-wife joint decision making process. See Davis (1971), Foote (1961), and Hempel (1974) for reviews of empirical research and Sheth (1974) for a review of theoretical research in this area. While important insights have been gained about the various roles each spouse plays in the joint decision making process, there is relatively little research on the following aspects of the joint decision making process:

One, what factors determine whether a particular purchase decision is jointly decided by the two spouses or left to one spouse's sole judgement?

Two, are there any systematic differences among households with varying socioeconomic-demographic characteristics in regard to the incidence of joint decision making? For example, is the joint decision making process more prevalent in middle class, middle aged couples as has been suggested in the literature?

Three, what is the incidence of conflict, disagreement or at least differences of opinion between the spouses in buying behavior?

Four, to what extent is family buying behavior comparable to organizational buying behavior? Are many of the complexities of organizational buying behavior, especially in regards to the tactics employed to resolve conflict, disagreement or differences of opinion directly relevant in the understanding of the household decision-making process?

Five, how is the conflict in buying behavior resolved between the spouses? What specific tactics such as persuasion or bargaining are employed by the spouses to resolve their conflict?

Six, are there any systematic differences among households with varying socioeconomic-demographic characteristics in regard to the ways the spouses resolve their conflict? For example, is bargaining more prevalent among highly educated households or among younger households?

Finally, are there life style correlates of conflict resolution? For example, does a spouse who is primarily a homebody and believes in the traditional role of a woman in the family utilize persuasion more often than other tactics of conflict resolution?

The purposes of this paper accordingly are to investigate family decision making, the conflict that is associated with household decision making, and the tactics employed by spouses to resolve their conflict. Such an understanding is extremely relevant from a variety of perspectives. First, marketers need to know whether conflict exists in a particular product they are marketing as well as to identify the basis for the conflict between the spouses. Such knowledge can then enable the marketer to direct his efforts toward resolving the conflict by proper communication. This is often done by the astute salesperson in retail buying and shopping situations, but very little effort seems to be directed by the manufacturers of national brands and products toward an integrated approach of enabling the spouses to resolve their conflicts in buying behavior. Second, prevalence of conflict and especially the tactics employed to resolve it may indeed be a better barometer of family structure and organization as well as the changing roles of the spouses in a marriage than many of the interpersonal interaction measurements. Finally, relatively little is known about the impact of conflict in buying behavior on the propensity to divorce. While considerable research has recently been undertaken on assessing the causes of divorce (see Kerckhoff (1976) for a review, it has been unfortunately directed toward only the fundamental values and behavior such as sex, money, religion and raising children. It is the strong belief

of these authors that research on conflict in purchase behavior may provide more subtle insights into the causes for divorce: it is often said that it is the little things which are marginally more critical in sustaining a marriage.

STUDY DESIGN

This study was designed to explore several areas of family decision making. The first area deals with the aspect of joint versus autonomous decision making of the family. Here, joint decisions were differentiated from autonomous ones. The reason for this is that interpersonal conflict is less likely to be manifested in autonomous decisions (Davis, 1976; Sheth, 1974; Wilkening, 1958).

The second area deals with the determinants for the prevalence of joint versus autonomous decision making. Those determinants include such variables as socioeconomic status, family life cycle, and life styles (Ferber and Lee, 1974; Blood, 1958; Heer, 1958; Komarovsky, 1961). This essentially involves looking at interfamilial differences as opposed to intrafamilial differences, in the prevalence of joint decision making for a specific purchase decision.

The third area deals with the products chosen for the study. Here, three products were selected from which to study the joint decision making process. These products are namely an automobile, vacation, and a major furniture piece or set. These products are relatively more expensive; they have some manifestation of conspicuous consumption due to social imagery; they tend to reflect one's self; they have become necessities of life so that almost every household buys them; and they are typically used by all members of the family. At the same time, there is growing evidence that the husband is more involved in the purchase of the automobile, the wife is more involved with the purchase of furniture, and both are equally involved in the purchase of a vacation when they decide together.

The fourth area deals with the determinants of conflict and the specific tactics employed in resolving the conflict. Conflict arises when there is a felt need to decide jointly and there are differences in goals or perceptions between the spouses (Sheth, 1974). Depending upon whether the two spouses have a disagreement about goals or perceptions, there are four distinct types of conflict resolution which follow from premises in organizational buyer behavior (March and Simon, 1958; Sheth, 1973). These types of conflict resolution are problem-solving, persuasion, bargaining, and politicking (for a somewhat different perspective, see Davis, 1976).

The problem-solving approach to conflict resolution arises when there is disagreement about specific alternatives under consideration or on any of their attributes. It is generally due to differences in perceptions rather than differences in goals between the spouses. This approach typically entails a search for new alternatives or new information on existing alternatives.

Persuasion as an approach to conflict resolution arises when there is disagreement between the spouses about specific subgoals in a purchase situation although there is agreement at a more fundamental level. The persuasion tactic is manifested when one spouse is trying to convince the other how the specific subgoal and the alternatives which satisfy it in a purchase situation are incompatible with the overall family goals.

Bargaining as a tactic of conflict resolution arises when there is agreement between spouses that they cannot agree on buying goals or choice criteria and when the purchase decision is more important to one of the spouses. This tactic as the name implies results in some reciprocity agreement between the spouses: I will let you do what you want in this situation if you will let me do what I want in some other situation. The typical outcome of the

bargaining tactic is the reduction of the joint decision to a unilateral choice in exchange for some favor.

The final strategy of conflict resolution is called politicking. It is manifested when the two spouses have a fundamental difference in their value system as it impinges upon a specific buying situation. The tactic is commonly manifested by way of soliciting support from other members of the family or even from friends and relatives, and thereby to exercise pressure on the other spouse to change his or her deliberations. The presence of informal coalitions in the family structure is often a good indicator of utilization of this type of tactic in conflict resolution.

Based on the above discussion, the study was designed to explore and gain insights into the following questions:

1. What is the extent of joint decision making between spouses for purchases of relatively expensive products and services such as furniture, vacation, and automobile?
2. What are some of the reasons for people to decide either jointly or unilaterally in buying furniture, a vacation, and an automobile?
3. To what extent does the incidence of joint decision making vary across households? Are there some household correlates such as life cycle and socioeconomic status which covary with the incidence of joint-decision making?
4. What are the specific tactics of conflict resolution utilized by husbands or wives when they have a disagreement in the buying of furniture, a vacation, and an automobile?
5. Are there some household correlates which covary with specific tactics employed by spouses? For example, do respondents who utilize bargaining as a tactic of conflict resolution differ

significantly from those who utilize problem solving as a tactic of conflict resolutions?

6. Is the incidence of conflict in buying behavior related to any specific household characteristics? For example, do more educated respondents tend to manifest greater conflict in general?
7. What are the life style correlates of tactics of conflict resolution? Can we assess any systematic life style profiles of bargainers, persuaders, problem-solvers, or politickers?

SAMPLE AND METHOD

The sample consisted of a quota sample of families to comprise a cross-section of respondents with respect to socioeconomic status and life cycle. The respondents were drawn from Chicago, Illinois, its surrounding suburbs, and Champaign, Illinois area. A total of 320 couples were contacted who were asked to fill out a self-administered, structured questionnaire. Each couple was instructed to fill out the questionnaire without consultation with his or her spouse. The completed questionnaires were collected after a few days. The cooperation rate was approximately 92 percent of those households contacted or 294 couples. However, in some instances, the husband did not fill out the questionnaire due to travel schedules and other commitments. And, since there was a secondary interest in matching husband-wife perceptions about the same purchase behavior, only those couples were retained in the final sample where both the husband and the wife had cooperated in filling out the questionnaire. Finally after eliminating some respondents based on reliability checks, the final sample was reduced to 268 couples or 536 respondents.

Each respondent was asked to recall and describe the most recent purchase of an automobile, a vacation, and furniture. He was also asked to state

whether the decision was unilateral by one spouse or joint between the spouses, and the reasons for this unilateral or joint decision behavior. The respondent was then asked to recall if there were any areas of disagreement between the spouses in the buying of furniture, a vacation, and an automobile. Each respondent was also given a list of salient criteria for each of the product classes and asked to recall disagreement on any of them. Finally, for each salient criterion such as style, price, dealer, color, delivery, etc. the respondent was given a standard description of the four tactics of conflict resolution and asked to check only one of them in the case there was some disagreement between the spouses on that specific criterion.

The questionnaire also obtained the standard socioeconomic-demographic information. However, both life cycle and socioeconomic status were directly measured by asking the respondent to check a specific category from among those listed instead of deriving them by indexing variables such as income, education and occupation in the case of the socioeconomic status index, and age, marital status, number of children and age distribution of children in the case of the life cycle index. Next, a battery of life style statements was administered following the tradition of life styles and psychographics research in marketing (Wells, 1974; Wells and Cosmas, 1976). The life style statements were administered to see if certain individualistic life styles correlated with specific tactics of conflict resolution. The questionnaire and the study methodology was pretested in a preliminary study on a sample of about fifty couples from different cross-sections on life cycle and socioeconomic status backgrounds and the final questionnaire was revised based on the pilot study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed in many different ways. However, only certain analytical procedures and results are reported here. The results are presented

to parallel the specific research questions pointed out earlier.

Table 1 summarizes the incidence of autonomous versus joint decision making in the purchase of an automobile, a vacation, or furniture.

Insert Table 1 Here

The incidence of joint decision making is quite high for all three products, and especially for a vacation. There are several possible explanations for the relatively high incidence of joint decision making with respect to these product categories (Cunningham and Green, 1974; Davis, 1976; Sheth, 1974). Specifically, there are four aspects with respect to the buying task which produce greater joint decision making: (1) relative importance of the purchase of the product, (2) perceived risk inherent in the purchase, and (3) time pressures involved in making the purchase decision due to the complexity of the product, and (4) whether the product is consumed jointly or individually by one family member.

With regard to the importance of the purchase, the products chosen are relatively expensive and have a "large ticket" imagery in their purchase. "Large ticket" purchases usually involve large expenditures of time, money or both. When a family expends large amounts of time and money on a particular product something else of importance to one or both of the spouses may have to be sacrificed. This sacrifice can cause couples to have a greater involvement in the purchase decision and thus, display a larger share in the outcome of the decision, and propensity to decide jointly.

The perceived risk inherent in the purchase of the products involved can be seen in terms of the costs both monetarily and psychologically of making a wrong decision. For example, buying a "lemon" car can have serious financial implications, while choosing a wrong vacation can be a psychological let-down.

The time pressure variable becomes apparent when one looks at the complexity of the product involved. The three products involved here represent sufficient complexity to require lengthy discussions, and hence this larger time frame increases possibility of the other spouse becoming involved in the decision process.

Finally, the products investigated in this study tend to be consumed jointly by several family members. Though there is no one-to-one correspondence between joint consumption and joint decision making, "a large number of buying decisions are likely to be joint if their consumption is also joint" (Sheth, 1974). Furthermore, the relatively higher incidence of joint decision making for vacation purchase can be also attributed to the fact that the vacation represents a decision of equal implications, risk, expertise, fun, need to get away from it all, and involvement for both spouses.

As expected with regard to autonomous decisions, the husband tends to dominate the wife in terms of who decided on the purchase of an automobile (34.4%H vs. 8.5%W), the wife if dominant in the furniture decision (33.1%W vs. 5.4%H), and both are somewhat equivalent in autonomous decision making for vacations (10.1%W vs. 12.0%H). With respect to the autonomous decisions, our results seem to parallel other studies (Davis, 1976; Davis and Rigaux, 1975; Cunningham and Green, 1974; Sharp and Mott, 1956). The chief explanation for the autonomous decisions with respect to fairly important and complex purchase situations has been usually attributed to role expectations and expertise of the spouses. In general, husbands are usually more associated with automobiles, wives with furniture, and neither husbands or wives having any particular role expectations with regards to the choice of a vacation.

Insert Table 2 Here

Tables 2 and 3 summarized the distributions of the reasons respondents gave for their respective autonomous or joint decisions. The most frequently mentioned reasons for joint decisions were: nature of the product requiring joint consumption, perceived risk involved in the purchase decision, importance of the product class to the family, a family life style which encourages joint decision making process, magnitude of the decision, and the idea that two heads are better than one. Many of these reasons are the same as those hypothesized in the Sheth model of family buying decisions.

Insert Table 3 Here

In Table 3, the most frequently mentioned reasons why the respondents claimed that the purchase of an automobile, a vacation, or furniture was a unilateral decision by one of the spouses were: the greater competence of one partner, the greater importance of the decision to one of the spouses, the head of the household deciding all major purchases, the avoidance of conflict and arguments, too busy to decide together, and a preference for dividing responsibilities in managing the household.

Among those who decided unilaterally, it is interesting to probe a little further at some of the differences in percentages between automobile, vacation, and furniture unilateral decisions. It would appear that the wife allows the husband to decide on automobile alone due to role expectations, his greater competence and involvement and vice versa for the wife with respect to furniture. On the other hand, unilateral decisions in the vacation area are used to avoid conflict.

Insert Table 4 Here

What type of households prefer joint decision making? Table 4 provides some insights into the demographic correlates of the joint vs. autonomous decision making process.

One of the demographic variables investigated influence whether a decision is joint or autonomous is family life cycle. It has been hypothesized that the extent of joint decision making would vary inversely with the age of the family, and hence be more prevalent in the early part of a couple's life cycle and less in the later stages. This was the case. Joint decision making in relation to autonomous decision making increased up to the middle stage and then began to decline.

A second demographic variable investigated to influence joint vs. autonomous decision making was socioeconomic status. In this study, socioeconomic status was measured directly by asking respondents to classify themselves based on their perceptions of what class they were in as opposed to an indirect method such as indexing income and occupation. With regard to socioeconomic class it has been noted that the lower and upper classes tend to engage in more autonomous decision making than the middle classes (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Converse and Crawford, 1949; Komarovsky, 1946 and 1961, Sheth, 1974; Wilkening, 1958).

The above hypotheses seem to hold true when looking at the data. Distortions come about in the purchase of a vacation. Here the predominance of joint decision making is so strong that other relationships seem to be of little consequence.

The third and fourth demographic variables that have been hypothesized to influence joint decision making were wife's education and employment. From past studies (Blood and Hamblin, 1958; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Heer, 1958), it has been supposed that as the wife's intellectual and financial resources increased so would her relative influence in the family structure. Up to this point, however, the increase in power and influence due to increased education or income have not been demonstrated consistently. Other variables such as a spouse's particular expertise (e.g., mechanical vs. artistic) or

role expectations of the spouses seem to dominate, and thus, negate the wife's education or financial contributions. However, this was not the case. As the wife's education increased, the incidence of joint decision making increased. As for the wife's employment status, there was no significant relationship.

The demographic variables used in this study tended to answer some questions about their relationship to joint decision making. A family's life cycle, social status, and wife's education tended to influence the incidence of joint decision in the family. The influence of the wife's employment, however, showed little significance.

Insert Table 5 Here

In Table 5, the degree to which conflict is prevalent in joint decision making is shown. Here, subjects were partitioned into various incidences of conflict categories along the traditional lines of Twedts' (1964) heavy half propositions. This was done in order to measure the extent of conflict, and to ascertain if different degrees of conflict had any relationship to the variables used in this study.

Insert Table 6 Here

What type of households tend to experience conflict in buying behavior between two spouses? Table 6 provides insights into demographic differences between households experiencing no conflict, low amounts of conflict and high amounts of conflict.

In looking at the incidence of conflict (especially high conflict) with regard to the demographic variables used, it can be seen that in the case of socioeconomic status there was a tendency for high conflict among families in the middle and upper middle income classes. High conflict in this social

class is probably due to the equal status each spouse enjoys as a result of being in these classes. With regard to wife's education it seems that the incidence of high conflict is less prevalent when the wife has experienced post graduate work.

In terms of the other demographic variables studied, family life cycle and wife's occupation had little impact on the degree of conflict prevalent. In fact, there was no significant difference between the high and low groups with respect to those two variables.

Insert Table 7 Here

Based on the information provided by the respondents about the specific tactics employed for each area of disagreement between the spouses, they were classified into four categories: those who primarily followed problem solving, persuasion, bargaining or politicking tactics in resolving conflicts. However, due to the number of respondents who stated bargaining or politicking as a tactic of conflict resolution the two tactics were combined to form a bargaining-politicking group. Table 7 summarized the results on the employment of specific tactics of conflict resolution.

What is interesting is that persuasion was the dominant tactic chosen to resolve conflict. This seems somewhat contrary to the traditional American idea of problem-solving as a primary means of resolving conflict. Further, the lack of response to the use of bargaining and politicking seems deflated. If politicking and bargaining represent a tactic of conflict resolution as with business organizations, one would suppose it would carry over to the family environment. What might have happened is that some couples could have been reluctant to state such behavior because of the negative connotations the behavior implies.

Insert Table 8 Here

In investigating the demographic correlates with different tactics of conflict resolution, two variables were significant. These variables were family life cycle and socioeconomic status. Table 8 provides the results of this investigation.

With regard to family life cycle, it appears that as couples move through different stages they tend to use different tactics. For example, young couples with no children, couples with teenage children, and senior citizens tend to use problem-solving as a tactic to resolve conflict, couples with small and grown-up children tend to use persuasion, and the use of bargaining and politicking seems evenly spread across the family life cycle. The reason for this varied use of tactics across the family life cycle probably can be attributed to the different types of environments that occur with the presence or absence of children, and with children of different ages.

In terms of the socioeconomic status, it appears that the lower middle and upper classes tend to use persuasion as a tactic of conflict resolution, with the middle and upper middle using problem-solving, and all classes involved about equally in the use of bargaining-politicking. Further, the upper middle class seems to prefer persuasion.

Finally, an attempt was made to correlate tactics of conflict resolution with individual's life style profiles. The life style profile consisted of nearly 100 items considered salient to measuring similarities and differences between spouses in the way they feel about personal values and goals. Table 9 is a summary of those life style statements on which there were significant differences ($p < .05$) when cross-tabulated with the categories of tactics of conflict resolution.

about the following statements about respondents who used different tactics of conflict resolution. Bargainers-politickers, as opposed to the other groups, tend to agree with such statements as:

- "I like to think I am a bit of a swinger."
- "A cocktail or drink at the end of the day is a perfect way to unwind."
- "There are day people and there are night people, I am a day person."
- (Disagree)
- "The father should be the boss in the house."
- "There are situations in which sex outside of marriage can be a healthy thing."
- "Women are usually poor drivers."
- "Most people are successful in life because of ability and drive, not luck and pull."
- "I like to experiment with new and different things."
- "The sale and use of marijuana should be made legal."

The picture of the bargainers-politickers that seems to emerge is one of a swinger who is rooted in traditional thought patterns about a male's role, males' superiority over women, and themselves. As with swingers, this group likes experimenting with new things. The use of bargaining-politicking as tactics seems consistent with a swinging pattern of living. Swingers, as impressions go, seem to be rooted to very few values of their own. The formation of coalitions to oppose others is a way of using others for a value system by which to resolve a conflict.

Problem-solvers as a group tend to agree with such statements as:

- "I love the fresh air and out-of-doors."
- "I like to pay cash for everything I buy."
- "I have more self-confidence than most people."
- "I usually consult Consumer Reports before making a major purchase."

The life style picture of the problem-solver is one that seems consistent with the image some people have of persons who use such a tactic. What emerges is the picture of a thoughtful, deliberate person who has confidence in his or her abilities. For example, they tend to consult Consumer Reports before making a major purchase and have more self-confidence than others.

Persuaders as a group tend to agree such statements as:

- "I consider myself a member of the silent majority."

"There is too much emphasis on sex today."

"A wife should have a great deal of information about her husband's work."

"My children are the most important thing in my life."

"I usually consult Consumer Reports before making a major purchase decision." (Disagree)

In describing the life style portrait of the person who uses persuasion as a tactic of conflict resolution, it appears that persuaders follow the popular image of the "silent majority." They have basically middle class values of home and children, and feel there is too much emphasis on sex today. Further, they don't seem as predisposed as the other groups to use information such as Consumer Reports.

The life style profiles that have emerged about the various groups that use different tactics of conflict resolution is far from clear. Several groups lack large numbers and it appears now more life style statements should have been incorporated in the questionnaire. What does come out of the analysis is the idea that different tactics are probably rooted in different life styles.

SUMMARY

As was stated at the beginning of this paper, this study was designed to gain insights into various aspects of family decision making, particularly joint decision making, conflict in decision making, and its resolution. In this regard, it is felt that the purpose of the study was accomplished.

There seemed to be a preponderance of joint decision making, at least, with regard to "large ticket" items. Some reasons were discovered why people use joint decision making as opposed to autonomous decision making. It was seen that there appears to be some demographic and life style correlates which affect family decision making, conflict, and its resolution.

In general, the data supported expectations with regard to joint vs. autonomous decision making and specific tactics used to resolve conflict.

However, much more work needs to be done. The area of conflict in family buyer behavior is still a relatively new topic with many other avenues of possible research. This study represents at best, an exploration into a new topic. More products need to be studied to determine if there are categories of products which bring about a greater or lesser incidence of joint or autonomous decision making.

Conflict and its subsequent resolution need to be looked at further to determine what would be the best strategies marketers could use to minimize the conflict in their favor.

And finally, as with cognitive dissonance, certain individuals indicated they did not resolve the question, but lived with it. We need to look further at those individuals to determine what questions or conflict elicit such a response or what type of person is involved.

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TABLE 1

Incidence of Autonomous Versus Joint Decision Making*

n =	Automobile (514) %	Vacation (519) %	Furniture (502) %	Total %
Wife Alone	8.6	10.2	33.1	17.2
Husband Alone	34.4	12.2	5.4	17.4
Joint Decision	<u>57.0</u> 100%	<u>77.6</u> 100%	<u>61.5</u> 100%	<u>65.4</u> 100%

*Total sample was 536 respondents

TABLE 2

Reasons for Joint Decision Making*

	n =	Automobile (293) %	Vacation (403) %	Furniture (309) %	Total %
1. It was too big a decision to decide alone.		38.2	28.0	31.1	31.9
2. It is better to decide together on those products which will be used by everybody in the family.		73.4	48.9	74.8	64.0
3. Two heads are better than one.		37.9	28.3	32.7	32.4
4. Economically and socially it was a very important purchase.		42.7	25.8	27.8	31.3
5. Our family life style requires that we decide together on most matters.		66.2	57.8	56.0	59.7
6. It is customary among our friends that spouses decide together on this product.		8.5	8.4	7.1	8.0
7. We wanted something both would like.		5.1	4.2	2.9	4.1

*The percentage exceed hundred percentage points due to multiple answers encouraged from the checklist provided in the questionnaire.

TABLE 3

Reasons for Autonomous Decision Making*

n =	Automobile (221) %	Vacation (116) %	Furniture (193) %	Total %
1. We were too busy to decide together.	9.0	4.3	13.5	9.6
2. We like to divide responsibilities in managing the household.	9.0	10.3	12.4	10.5
3. Other spouse was away at the time of the decision.	6.3	2.6	4.7	4.9
4. Head of household decides on all major purchases in our household.	13.6	11.2	5.2	10.0
5. It was not an important consumption decision to require joint effort.	2.7	7.8	11.4	7.0
6. Leaving it to one partner avoids unnecessary conflicts and arguments.	9.5	13.8	7.8	9.8
7. It is common in our age to leave the decision to one spouse on this product.	7.2	3.4	7.8	6.6
8. One partner was more competent and knowledgeable in making the decision.	36.2	9.5	29.0	27.7
9. We hate to shop together.	5.0	3.4	8.8	6.0
10. Our family life style encourages individual rather than joint decisions.	4.5	5.2	6.2	5.3

TABLE 3 (Continued)

11.	It was a more important decision to only one of us.	24.9	18.1	20.7	12.5
12.	It is common among our friends to leave the decision to one spouse.	3.6	1.7	4.7	3.6
13.	It is usually the responsibility of only one partner.	11.8	4.3	9.3	9.2

*The percentages exceed hundred percentage points due to multiple answers encouraged from the checklist provided in the questionnaire.

TABLE 4

Demographic Correlates of Autonomous Vs.
Joint Decision Making

# =	Autonomous (530) %	Joint (1005) %	Total (1535) %
<u>Family Life Cycle</u>			
No Children	16.0(30.2)	19.5(69.8)	18.3
Small Children	14.2(23.4)	24.5(76.6)	20.9
Teenage Children	37.2(37.3)	32.9(62.7)	34.4
Grownup Children	28.5(44.9)	18.4(55.1)	21.9
Senior Citizens	<u>4.2(31.9)</u> 100%	<u>4.7(68.1)</u> 100%	<u>4.5</u> 100%

$$\chi^2 = 34.395 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

Socioeconomic Status

Lower Class	8.3(23.0)	14.6(77.0)	12.4
Lower Middle Class	12.8(26.0)	19.3(74.0)	17.1
Middle Class	40.0(36.8)	36.2(64.2)	37.5
Upper Middle Class	33.6(40.6)	25.9(59.4)	28.6
Upper Class	<u>5.3(41.2)</u> 100%	<u>4.0(58.8)</u> 100%	<u>4.4</u> 100%

$$\chi^2 = 29.093 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

Wife's Education

Grade School	1.1(22.2)	2.1(77.8)	1.8
High or Trade School	28.1(40.9)	21.4(59.1)	23.7
Some College	32.6(37.3)	29.0(62.7)	30.2
College Degree	30.6(31.5)	35.0(68.5)	33.5
Post Graduate	<u>7.5(24.1)</u> 100%	<u>12.5(75.9)</u> 100%	<u>10.8</u> 100%

$$\chi^2 = 19.455 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

Number of Decisions

Autonomous	530
Joint	1005
Total	1535

TABLE 5

Degree of Conflict Prevalent in
Joint Decisions

	<u>#</u>	<u>Automobile %</u>	<u>Vacation %</u>	<u>Furniture %</u>	<u>Total %</u>
No Conflict	(64)	5.1	7.5	7.6	6.8
Low Conflict	(478)	47.8	50.7	53.6	51.0
High Conflict	(396)	<u>47.1</u> 100%	<u>41.8</u> 100%	<u>38.8</u> 100%	<u>42.2</u> 100%

TABLE 6

Demographic Correlates Of Conflict
In Purchase Behavior

	No & Low Conflict %	High Conflict %	Total %
<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>			
Lower Class	1.1(60.0)	1.0(40.0)	1.1
Lower Middle Class	14.2(71.0)	5.8(29.0)	10.6
Middle Class	43.7(57.5)	44.2(42.5)	43.9
Upper Middle Class	36.9(51.8)	47.0(48.2)	41.2
Upper Class	<u>4.1(73.3)</u>	<u>2.0(26.7)</u>	<u>3.2</u>
	100%	100%	100%

$$\chi^2 = 23.84 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

Wife's Education

Grade School	.3(20.0)	2.0(80.0)	1.0
High or Trade School	21.8(56.3)	23.0(43.7)	22.3
Some College	31.4(58.8)	30.0(41.2)	30.8
College Degree	31.9(55.3)	35.4(44.7)	33.4
Post Graduate	<u>14.6(67.5)</u>	<u>9.6(32.5)</u>	<u>12.5</u>
	100%	100%	100%

$$\chi^2 = 17.39 \quad df = 4 \quad p < .05$$

TABLE 7

Tactics of Conflict Resolution
Employed

	<u>#</u>	<u>Automobile</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Vacation</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Furniture</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
Problem solving	(166)	27.9	30.2	18.6	25.2
Persuasion	(416)	57.9	59.4	70.6	63.0
Bargaining	(36)	5.1	5.2	7.2	5.9
Politicking	(36)	9.1	5.2	3.6	5.9

TABLE 8

Demographic Correlates of
Tactics of Conflict Resolution

# =	Problem- solving (166) %	Persuasion (416) %	Bargaining- Politicking (72) %	Total %
<u>Family Life Cycle</u>				
No Children	20.1(29.7)	16.4(61.3)	13.8(9.0)	17.1
Small Children	18.2(19.0)	26.6(70.3)	23.6(10.7)	24.1
Teenage Children	40.9(31.1)	33.1(63.0)	47.2(5.9)	36.7
Grown Children	15.6(21.8)	20.8(72.3)	9.7(5.9)	18.2
Senior Citizens	<u>5.2(34.6)</u> 100%	<u>3.1(50.0)</u> 100%	<u>5.6(15.4)</u> 100%	<u>3.9</u> 100%

$$\chi^2 = 14.8 \quad df = 8 \quad p < .10$$

Socioeconomic Status

Lower Class	1.3(33.3)	.8(50.0)	1.4(16.7)	1.0
Lower Middle Class	9.1(19.5)	13.8(74.0)	6.9(6.5)	11.8
Middle Class	50.0(29.1)	39.1(57.2)	54.2(13.7)	43.5
Upper Middle Class	39.0(24.9)	41.1(65.5)	34.7(9.6)	39.9
Upper Class	<u>.6(0.4)</u> 100%	<u>5.2(88.0)</u> 100%	<u>2.8(11.6)</u> 100%	<u>3.8</u> 100%

$$\chi^2 = 15.9 \quad df = 8 \quad p < .05$$

TABLE 9

Life Style Correlates of Tactics of Conflict Resolution

	Problem-Solving	Persuasion	Bargaining- Politicking
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
I like to be considered a leader	61.2	68.2	70.6
I like to think I am a bit of a swinger	31.6	29.8	59.5
A cocktail or drink at the end of the day is a perfect way to unwind	22.6	31.6	41.6
I would rather travel by car than by airplane	53.9	43.0	52.2
I love the fresh air and out-of-doors	97.0	90.7	84.7
The father should be the boss in the house	41.4	44.0	48.6
Women are usually poor drivers	13.9	13.8	19.8
There are situations in which sex outside of the marriage can be a healthy thing	31.1	30.3	44.2
Children should take music lessons	56.4	66.0	51.4
There should be a gun in every home	8.5	5.5	21.4
Advertising leads to wasteful buying in our society	57.2	58.4	44.1
I like to pay cash for everything I buy	68.7	46.7	51.4
When something begins to get a little old, I want to replace it even when its in good working order	10.2	10.9	23.0
It is not what you know but who you know that counts	26.2	39.0	29.6
I have more self confidence than most people	57.6	47.6	47.0

TABLE 9 (Continued)

Most people are successful in life because of ability and drive, not luck or pull	80.0	84.7	80.4
Most people are honest	64.2	81.4	81.4
Nobody cares what I think	8.5	5.4	15.3
Many commercials are cute and amusing	62.3	65.0	61.1
I usually consult <u>Consumer Reports</u> before making a major purchase	55.7	37.0	49.6
I like to experiment with new and different things	70.5	65.1	58.6
There are day people and there are night people, I am a day person	65.0	65.6	59.7
There is too much emphasis on sex today	67.6	68.7	55.6
I consider myself a member of the silent majority	50.2	60.1	45.8
The sale and use of marijuana should be made legal	37.9	43.4	49.6
I sometimes spend money on myself that I should spend on the family	34.4	31.1	48.6
My children are the most important thing in my life	42.1	43.3	47.2
A wife should have a great deal of information about her husband's work	76.4	79.3	75.0
Television is our primary source of entertainment	31.5	39.8	43.0
For a really good vacation, couples should try to get away without the children	46.2	46.9	52.2



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